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Opening Remarks The Honorable Duncan Hunter Range Modernization Hearing

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am delighted to be here today with my colleagues from the Space and Aeronautics subcommittee and the R&D subcommittee.

Because I have long believed that assured access to space is key to maintaining our national security, I am concerned by recent events that indicate this access may be deteriorating. These concerns have been highlighted by recent revelations concerning illegal technology transfers from the United States to Communist China. These transfers have improved Chinese launch vehicle capabilities and, in all likelihood, the nuclear arsenal that these improved Chinese rockets can deliver. The Cox Committee has stated clearly that these transfers have materially harmed U.S. national security.

These illegal transfers present the nation with both a short-term and a long-term challenge in space launch. The short-term challenge is this: How do we improve our launch capacity so that our satellite manufacturers can avoid the necessity of relying on overseas launch providers? This challenge is important, both to avoid the national security consequences that result from technology transfers, intended or not, as well as serious economic consequences to our satellite industry that might result if we can't meet U.S. launch demand with domestic launch capacity.

The long-term challenge is this: As the launch industry changes over the next several years, how should we organize our launch capabilities to maximize U.S. launch capacity to most effectively meet both our commercial and national security launch needs? We all recognize that the commercial demand for launch is growing and that it's expected to continue to do so into the future. Without minimizing the importance of the military requirement for assured access to space, this increased demand for commercial launch capacity will certainly play a key role in these considerations. We have a difficult task ahead of us to develop a coherent balance of commercial and national security interests and responsibilities.

I want to welcome the witnesses today, and I look forward to their thoughts on how we meet our space launch challenges.

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